

SERMON

Preach'd before the

QUEEN,

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Saint JAMES's Chappel,

On November the 5th, 1705.

MATTH. X. Ver. 16.

Behold I send you forth as Sheep in the midst of Wolves; be ye therefore Wise as Serpents, and Harmless as Doves.

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L O N D O N:

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Behold I send you forth as Sheep in the midst of Wolves : be ye therefore wise as Serpents, and harmless as Doves.

THE Holy Evangelist has given us, in this Chapter, an Authentick Copy of a Commission, which issued from the Highest Authority ; which convey'd the fullest Powers that were ever granted to any of the Sons of Men ; which was not to be executed without the utmost difficulty and Danger ; but was accompanied with such Instructions, as, if duly observ'd, would render all difficulties superable, and be a sure Guard against all Dangers. This Commission was given to the *Apostles* by our Saviour, *The Blessed and only Potentates, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords* : It's Purport was to rescue not one People or Nation, but the whole Race of Mankind, from a state of the most abject and wretched Slavery ; to put an end to the Tyranny of a proud and cruel Usurper, and to establish the Kingdom of God upon Earth. Such a Design as this, which threatned an entire overthrow to the Dominion of *Satan*, would be sure to meet with all the Opposition that the Fury of Hell could raise against it : and tho' from the Success of it, Men might promise to themselves the most perfect Liberty, and an affluence of the greatest Blessings, yet they were grown so much in love with their Chains, and were so insensible of their true Interest, that they also would unite all their Forces to stop the Progress, to defeat the Enterprize, and to outrage the Persons of those, who came for their Deliverence. The Message, which the *Apostles* were to carry into all Places whither they were to go, was, *Peace upon Earth, and Good-will towards Men* : but the Entertainment they were every where to look for, was Hatred, Persecution, and Death. They must not hope, that the Sacredness, of their Character, and the Majesty of Him, by whom they were sent, would secure them from Indignities and Wrongs : for they were to represent a Despis'd, insulted, and Persecuted Master ; and from the Reception which he had found, might plainly fore-see what sort of Treatment they were to expect. *The Disciple*, he tells them, *is not above his Master, nor the Servant above his Lord* : It is enough for the Disciple that he be as his Master, and the Servant as his Lord. Naked and unarmed they were to expose themselves to the rage of Stiff-neck'd, hard-hearted, and Merciless People : Against such they are taught to provide ; they are allow'd



low'd to use no other Arms, than Wisdom and Innocence, *Behold I send you forth as Sheep in the midst of Wolves; by ye therefore wise as Serpents, and harmless as Doves.*

The Wisdom of the Serpent might seem to include in the Notion of it, some degrees of Subtilty and Guilt: The Simplicity of the Dove might be thought to intimate some Defect of Wariness and Prudence: Our *Saviour* therefore requires such a Temperature of both, that what was wanting in Either, might be supplied from the Superabundance of the other; so that from their Conjunction might result perfect Wisdom, free from all Guile, and a well-guarded Innocence, without the least mixture of Indiscretion.

Higher degrees of Wisdom and Integrity were requisite in the *Apostles*, than are absolutely necessary to every Disciple of *Christ*: for they were to lay the first Foundations of that *Church*, against which *the Gates of Hell were never to prevail*; and their Eminence in Wisdom and Virtue would, in a great measure, prevent the Mischief, that might redound to our holy Faith, from any Defect of the like Qualifications in those *Christians*, who should come after them: But since the Church of God in all Ages is best preserv'd by the same Methods, by which it was at first Established, the same Qualifications of Prudence and Innocence, which were necessary for the Planting of *Christ's Church*, are, tho' in more scanty proportions, still requisite for its Support and Maintenance. But neither are equal Measures of these Graces as this time requir'd in all *Christians*: Much less Detriment would ensue to the Church of God from the want of either of these in private Persons, who are only to adorn it with their Lives, than from the like want in Pastors, who are to guide It by their Vigilance, or in Magistrates, who are to protect It by their Authority: And therefore larger proportions of Wisdom and Integrity are requir'd in Princes, who are *to go out and come in before God's People*, than are necessary in those, who being plac'd under their Government, reap the Benefit of their wise and just Administration: A more plentiful share of God's *Urim and Thummim*, brightness of Understanding, and perfection of Virtue, ought to rest upon his *Holy Ones*, who are by their Doctrines and Examples *to teach Jacob God's Judgments, and Israel his Laws*, than are of necessity requir'd in those, who are *to seek the Law at their Mouths*: But tho' higher Degrees of Wisdom and Innocence are requir'd in some *Christians* than in others, yet the Duties themselves are not appropriated to any

Orders of Men : All who are numbred among the Sheep of *Christ*, all who are in the midst of Wolves, are concern'd in this wholesome Advice of our *Saviour*, *Be ye wise as Serpents, and harmless as Doves.*

Were Wisdom and Innocence so closely link'd together, that they were never to be found afunder, or were they singly sufficiently to the purposes of Life, so that there was little or no harm from their being separated, this Precept of our *Saviour* would be less necessary : But the Ill-consequences of their Disunion, the Expediences of their Conjunction, and consequently the Necessity of our observing this Precept of our *Lord*, will evidently appear, if we take a View,

I. Of the great Mischiefs that arise from the want of Wisdom in those that are Harmless.

II. Of the still greater Mischiefs that arise from the want of Innocence in those that are Wise.

III. Of the mighty Advantages that result from our being at the same time both *Wise as Serpents, and Harmless as Doves.*

Of these Heads I shall first speak in General, tho' not without an Eye all along to our Enemies of the *Church of Rome* ; to whom I shall afterwards more particularly apply what shall have been delivered.

First then : Let Us take a View of the great Mischiefs that arise from the want of Wisdom in those that are Harmless.

There is so near an Affinity between Wisdom and Goodness, that, according to the Notions of the *Moralists*, Prudence is an Essential Ingredient of every Virtue ; and even according to the Language of Holy Writ, which is much more to be depended upon, Wisdom and Piety, Folly and Wickedness, are Terms equivalent. But then this must be understood rather of the highest Perfection of Virtue, consider'd in *Theory*, than of those lower Degrees of it, which are to be met with in Common Practice ; for Experience assures us, that there are many Persons, whose Hearts are sincere and upright, and who make it their earnest and unwearied Study to have a *Conscience void of Offence, both towards God, and towards Man* ; of whom notwithstanding it must be confess'd, That they do not more excel others in Virtue and Piety, than they are surpass'd by others in sharpness of Wit, in subtilty of Counsels, and depth of Understanding. They have Wisdom sufficient to heve their own Souls, and to obtain Eternal Happiness in the Life to come ; but they have not Circumspection enough to espy, nor all the

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Dexterity that is necessary, to escape those manifold Dangers, to which they are expos'd in their passage thro' a wicked and deceitful World. There is in them a sweetness of Nature, and tenderness of Conscience, which will not suffer them to do the least Injury to any: Hence they are not apt to suspect any evil Intentions in others toward them; and for want of this due Caution, are unprovided against the Attempts of Crafty and Ill-designing Men. They form their Judgments of Mankind, not from Observations of what is done abroad, which these good Men seldom make, but from Reflections upon what passes within their own Breasts, which they are much more intent upon; hence they frame a probable Opinion of the Integrity of others, from what they certainly know of their own: and as it hath been observ'd to be a frequent Error, and very familiar with Wise Men, to measure other Persons by the Model of their own Abilities, and therefore often to shoot over the Mark, as supposing Men to project to themselves deeper Ends, and to practice more subtil Arts, than ever came into their Thoughts; so is it a no less frequent mistake with very good Men, who measure others by the Standard of their own Uprightness, to think of them, and to deal with them, as if they were much more honest, than they truly are.

There is in good *Christians* so great an Hatred of all Falshood and Dissimulation, that it would not only give a deep wound to their Consciences, but would even do a violence to their Natures to tell a known Lie; and thinkings others to be fram'd just as they are, and to act upon the same Principles, as they do, they are too liable to be impos'd upon by Men of false Tongues, and deceitful Lips: whatever is barely affirm'd, is by them easily credited; what is vouch'd with solemn Asseverations, leaves still less room in their Breasts for Doubt: what is confirmed by Oaths, and ratified by an Appeal to the Omniscience, and an Imprecation of the Vengeance of God, has with them all the Force and Credibility of a Self-evident and *Mathematical Truth*. And as honest and sincere *Christians* are thus apt to lay themselves open to the Practices of others by their too great Credulity, so also are they wont to discover those Secrets of their own Hearts, which might with a good Conscience be concealed, and which cannot without Prejudice be discloth'd, thro' their too great Freedom and Openness: They are so much afraid of disguising their Thoughts by Lying and Hypocrisy, that they often want that prudent

Reservedness, which is no way inconsistent with the sincerity of a downright Honest Man, or the simplicity of a Good Christian they bear Testimony of themselves and of their inward sentiments, even in their ordinary Conversation, as if they were to give Evidence upon their Oath at the Bar; and deem it not sufficient to maintain the Character of their Veracity, that they speak nothing but what is true, unless they at the same time speak out all the truth. That *Lying Lips are abomination to the Lord*, is an *Aphorism*, which never slips out of the thoughts of these honest and well-meaning Persons: but they are often apt to forget that other Observation of Solomon, That *A Fool uttereth all his Mind, but a Wise-man keepeth it in till afterwards*. For want of this prudent Reserve, they heedlessly incur dangers; which, without any Prejudice to their Virtue, they might escape, if they would but call in the Succours of Wisdom to their own necessary Defence. Where these are not call'd in, Men are apt to avoid one Extream by running into another, which, tho equally sinful, may be very hazardous; so far are they from revenging Injuries, as to invite them; so far from being Cruel, as to be tame; so far from hating their Enemies, as to cherish them; so far from persecuting, as not to fence and guard themselves against Persecution; so far from using those offensive weapons of Force and Oppression, which the *Gospel* forbids, as not to make use of those defensive Arms of Prudence and Caution, which the Soldiers of *Christ* are both allow'd and requir'd to be Expert in.

When the Wise-man adviseth us *to search after Wisdom, to put our Feet into her Fetters, and our Neck into her Chains*, he assures us, for our Encouragement, That *her Fetters shall be a strong Defence for us, and her Chains a Robe of Glory*. We have seen some of the Mischiefs which happen to Virtuous Men, thro' want of this Defence; and it would not be difficult to shew what farther detriment accrues to Vertue it self, from the lack of this Ornament. For when Men, thro' a Natural Disposition to Goodness, are very Honest, but thro' a Defect of good Understanding, are not equally Wise, this unguarded Simplicity is too apt to betray them into some little Weaknesses and Indiscretions, which may cast a Blemish both on them, and on those Vertues, which they practise but in an unbecoming manner, and with an ill Grace: And tho' Good-Nature and Christian Charity shoud over-look a few small Faults in those, who are conspicuous for many eminent Virtues; yet, in an Ill-nature and Uncharitable World, the want of Discretion in good Men may chance to cast a greater Blemish

Blemish on Religion, than the Honour done it by their Virtue and Integrity will ever be able to wipe off.

Let any one calmly consider, how contemptible a Figure Devotion makes, when it degenerates into Superstition; how great mischief Zeal has done in the World, when it has wanted the guidance of Discretion; and how often Conscientious Persons have unwittingly been made the Instruments of Men of no Conscience, to bring about their most wicked purposes, and he will be convinc'd of the necessity of adding to our *Virtue Knowledge*, and of joining the *Wisdom of the Serpent*, to the *Innocence of the Dove*.

That Prudence, which is by our Saviour prescrib'd as the most proper Preservative against the Rage of Persecutors, is more especially necessary to guard Us of the *Reform'd Religion* against the furious Attempts and subtle Machinations of our sworn, inveterate and implacable Enemies of the *Church of Rome*. If the *Wisdom of the Serpent* was therefore necessary to the *Apostles*, because they were sent forth as *Sheep in the midst of Wolves*; it becomes Us, who are encompass'd with the like Adversaries, and expos'd to the like Dangers, to Arm Our selves with the like Wariness and Precaution. We profess the same pure and undefiled Faith which the *Apostles* preach'd; and as our *Reformers* took especial care, that our Church should, as to its Doctrine Discipline and Worship, be restor'd to the same State, wherein it was by the *Apostles* at first Constituted; so the Malice of our Enemies has farther provided, That, as to its being hated also and persecuted, it should be Primitive and Apostolical. I have before observ'd how difficult it is for those, who are endued with the Simplicity of the Dove, to form adequate Notion of the exquisite Malignity of which some Men, and even some *Christians* are capable; Were a Good Man, who is unacquainted with the History of this Day's Conspiracy, to sit down and consider with himself the utmost Mischief; than an Uncountroull'd Malice, assisted with the deepest subtilty could possible devise, Any imaginary Scheme of Wickedness, with such a One could with the greatest Stretch of Invention conceive, would, I am perswaded, fall much short of the Complicated Villainy of that Hellish Design; and altho' we have unquestionable Evidence of the Truth of it, yet such is its Blackness, and so heinous its Guilt, that it can scarce enter into the Heart of any Good-natur'd Man to believe that to be possible, which the Notoriety of the Fact leaves him no room to doubt of. But tho' such wicked Designs before they

were discover'd, could not have been suspected; yet after repeated Deliverances from the Attempts of *Rome*, not to be suspicious of Danger from the same Enemies, would not be Charity, but Folly: not to be Awake, and upon our Guard against those, who have taken so much pains to rouse Us out of our Sleep, would be an Instance of downright *Lethargy*. It is foretold indeed, that under the *Gospel-Dispensation*, the *Lamb shall lie down with the Wolf*; but then it is suppos'd, That the Wolf has first laid aside his Natural Fierceness, and hath left off *to do hurt, and to destroy in God's Holy Mountains*. But whilst such *Ravenous Wolves* retain their Savage Temper, whilst there is in them an insatiable Appetite after Blood, whilst their Mouths are continually open to devour *Christ's Flock*, Common Prudence will suggest to Us the Use of all Honest and Lawful Means to keep Our-selves out of their Reach; and to preserve our Country from *Papal Tyranny*; our Laws, our Estates, our Liberties from *Papal Invasion*; our Lives from *Papal Persecution*; and our Souls from *Papal Superstition and Idolatry*, God forbid, that We should use any Inhumane, any Unchristian Methods, even for the compassing these good Ends; or should think all those means warrantable in the Service of the Best Cause, which our Enemies make no scruple to use for the Maintenance of the Worst: far be from Us those fraudulent Arts, and that Spirit of Persecution, which we so heartily condemn in them: But, if there be any thing laudable in these Our Adversaries, if any Means by them misus'd for the Support of a false Religion, may by Us be commendably employ'd for the Advancement of the True One, let Us not disdain to be imitators of their Wisdom, whose wickedness We so deservedly abhor. It would add great Strength to our Cause, if We exerted our selves in Defence of our *Establish'd Church*, with that hearty Zeal, that unwearied Industry, and, above all, with that firm Union among Our selves, which we cannot but observe, Approve, and be afraid of in our Enemies. All the jarring Parties among the *Romanists*, cordially agree in promoting the Interest of their Church. *Franciscains* and *Dominicains*, *Jansenists* and *Jesuits*, *Seculars* and *Regulars*, lay aside their mutual Quarrels, and join their Forces against the *Heretick*, as a Common Adversary: And tho', notwithstanding their so much boasted Concord, there is after all neither Unanimity in Opinion, nor Uniformity of Rites in that Church, it must be confess'd, that there is among them an Union of Interest, which

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conciles all Differences, and makes them One entire and Well-compacted Body. Thus, when the *Jews* were employ'd in the rebuilding the Holy City, we read that their Adversaries, however divided among themselves, were all United in Obstructing that Work. *It came to pass, saith the Sacred Historian, that when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and the Arabians, and the Ammonites, and the Asdodites heard, that the Walls of Jerusalem were made up, and the Breaches began to be stop'd; then, they were very wroth, and conspir'd all of them together to come, and to fight against Jerusalem, and to hinder it. Neh. 4. 7, 8.*

Against this United Strength of our Enemies, we should be much better able to cope, if We were as firmly combin'd in the Defence of our Religion, as they are in Assaulting it: If our scatter'd Forces were brought to a closer Order for the securing that Church, which is most vigorously attack'd by the *Papists*, as being by them known to be the strongest Bulwark against *Popery*. Wise was the Observation, and wholsom the Advice which *Nehemiah* gave to the Nobles, to the Rulers, and to the rest of the People, upon a like Occasion; *The Work is great and large, and we are separated upon the Wall, one far from another: In what place therefore ye here the sound of the Trumpet, resort Ye thither unto Us; Our God shall fight for Us.* May our Nobles and Rulers, and the rest of our People be thus united in the Defence of those Ramparts, which the Wisdom of our Law givers had provided against the Assaults of *Popery*: May this *Great and Large Work* be carry'd on by Joint-assistance, and be well-concerted Measures: May those, who at present are *Separated too far from One Another*, draw nearer together for their Common Defence: May Every One in his Place and Station diligently labour in this necessary Work: May *God fight for us*; and under God may Prudence be unto Us as a Weapon of Defence, against the treacherous Designs of our most Subtle, and most Pernicious Enemies.

Many and great are the Mischiefs, which have been observ'd to arise from the want of Wisdom in those that are Harmless, but still these are few and inconsiderable, in comparison of those, which we propos'd to consider in the Second place,

II. The Mischiefs, that arise from the want of Innocence, in those who are Wise.

Wisdom is the Gift of God; in it self Useful, and by the Author of it conferr'd on Us, for the noblest purposes; for the discovery of Truth, and the detection of Error; for the promoting of our Temporal and our Eternal Welfare; for procuring to Our-selves and to Others all the good things of which our Natures are capable, and for averting from Our-selves and Others all the Evils to which we are liable; for the stablishment and preservation of Kingdoms and States, by wholsom Laws, wise Counsels, and prudent Administration. But this Talent, which is by the Author of Our Nature and the Giver of all Grace, bestow'd upon Men for such great and glorious Ends, is capable of being perverted, and is by Persons destitute of that Innocence, which ought to be the inseparable

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Companion of Wisdom, often mis-us'd to the very Worst of Purposes; for the disguising of Truth, and palliating of Error; for extirpating God's true Religion, and introducing a false One; for the fomenting Schisms in the Church, and Tumults in the State; for disturbing the Peace of the World, and bringing all things into Disorder and Confusion. The pest and bane of Mankind, all the Sins which we commit, and the Evils which we suffer, had their first Spring and Origine from that Serpent, *which was more subtle than the Creatures that the Lord God had made*; and by Persons of the same Serpent-like Subtlety have all the Mischiefs, which have since plagued the Sons of *Adam*, been contriv'd and carry'd on. A wise and sober Heathen was wont to pronounce a Solemn Curse against those, who first found out the unlucky Distinction between *Profitable* and *Honest*; and several, who had only the Light of Reason to guide them, have judg'd it extremely scandalous, not only to preter Profit to Honesty, but even so much as to bring the Former into competition with the Latter: But some Persons who call themselves *Christians*, and some, who have appropriated to themselves the Holy Names of *J E S U S*, have thought it a plain Indication of Weakness and Folly to forego any thing which is greatly profitable, because it is a little Dishonest; and have laugh'd at the idle Scruples of those, who have given themselves the trouble to enquire, Whether an Action be Lawful or not, after it has once appear'd Expedient.

That it is Unlawful for us to do Evil that Good may come; that we should be strictly careful, not only that the Cause we are engag'd in be Just, but that the Methods, whereby we promote it, be also Warrantable; that we should chuse rather to Suffer the Greatest Injury, than to Do, the Least; that to deprive another of his just Right, and to promote Our own Gain by our Neighbour's Loss, is a more intolerable Evil than Pain, than Poverty, than Death; that we ought inviolably to do the thing which is Right, and to speake the Truth from our Heart; that he who sweareth to his Neighbour, should not disappoint him, tho' it were to his own Hurt; that the Publick Weal is always to be preferr'd to our Private Interest; and that every Good Man should be ready to sacrifice his Ease, his Fortunes, his Life for the Benefit of his Country; are the Principles of undeprav'd Reason, and of our most Holy Religion: But those Persons, in whom the Wisdom of the Serpent is so far predominant, as to leave no room for the Innocence of the Dove, finding that such Maxims as these cramp them in the pursuit of their Worldly Aims, take care to shake off these cumberfom Notions; and in their stead take up a Set of Principles, which, tho' they are not so well calculated for the good of Society, are more convenient for Private Use. That the shortest ways to an End are fittest to be chosen, be they never so foul; that the Appearances of Virtue is an Advantage, but the Practice of it a Burden; that Charity ought to Begin at Home, and to End there too, are Maxims, which, tho' own'd by few, are by many made the measures of their Actions.

Now, what Limits, what Stops can be put to the Hurt that may be done

done by Persons, who have once strongly imbib'd these Notions : by Persons, who have Policy enough to contrive, Cunning enough to dissemble, Insinuation enough to persuade, Dexterity enough to execute any Mischief ; and have no Sense of Common Honesty to restrain them, no Principle of Sound Religion to controul them ; or, which is worst of all, are, by the Prejudices of a false Religion, encourag'd and push'd on to perpetrate the greatest Villainies ! The Wisdom of such Men must be very Reverse of that Wisdom, which is from Above ; it is neither pure, nor peaceable ; neither Gentle, nor easy to be entreated ; it is void of Mercy, and of good Fruits, Partial and Hipocritical. In short, It is from Below, from the Old Serpent ; and where it is found, there is Confusion, and every Evil Work. From a Wisdom thus *Anti-Christian*, thus Sensual, thus Devilish, there must of course issue forth Mischiefs too many to be numbred, and the less necessary to be farther insisted on in general, because no General Discourse can give Us so just and lively an Image of the Wisdom of the Serpent, abstracted from the Simplicity of the Dove, as We may form to Our-selves, by reflecting on the Willy Conduct, the subtle Intrigues, and the refined Policy of the Church of *Rome*.

The Interest and Grandeur of Holy Church is the End, which all of that Communion constantly, steadily, and regularly pursue. All their New Doctrines are so modell'd, all their Disciplines so form'd, and all their Designs so laid, as joyntly to promote this One End. All means are judg'd not only Fit or Unfit, but even Lawful or Unlawful, according to their Expediency or Inexpediency for the Compassing this End. This is always uppermost in their View, alwas first in their Intention ; and such Intention sanctifies all Methods, that may any ways contribute to the Accomplishment of It. Treachery and Violence, Breach of Promises and of Oaths, Privy Conspiracies and Open Rebellions, the Assassination of Princes, and the Massacre of their Subjects ; the Excision of a Royal Family, with all its Branches ; the mingling of Kings, Nobles and Commons in one general Slaughter ; the Cutting off an whole Nation, both as to its Present Support, and as to its Future Hopes, by one compendious Blow ; the Destruction, not only of the Bodies, but even of the Souls of Obstinate Hereticks, dying, according to these Mens Uncharitable Opinions, out of the Pale of the Church, and without the Means of Salvation, are all deem'd, not only Innocent and Allowable, but even Commendable and Meritorious ; are justified by their ablest *Casuits* in their Writings ; are encourag'd by the Directors of Conscience in Private Confessions ; are recommended to the Furtherance of GOD's Blessings by Prayers, by Sacrements, and *Masses* are Celebrated with Applause in the Holy *Conclave* ; are ratified by the Sovereign Authority of their Infalible Judge ; and entitle those, who are engag'd in them, to Saintship, to Hymns, to Incense, and to Religious Worship, as often as they are perform'd with a good Intention, and design'd for the Maintenance and Propagation of the *Catholick* Cause.

Heathen Rome, as ambitious as it was of Dominion, scorn'd to advance
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it self by such dishonest Methods, as *Christian Rome* is not ashamed to use for the Establishment of its Universal Empire. A *Roman Consul*, when an Overture hath been made him by the Subject of a Powerful Enemy to dispatch his own Prince, and thereby to put and end to a dangerous War, hath generously rejected the Proposal, and sent the Traitor back to his Master to be punish'd for his Treachery. But can *Christian Rome* furnish us with such an Instance of Moral Honesty? Would such a generous Refusal of a mighty Advantage to the Church of *Rome* meet with as much Applause now in a *Consistory of Cardinals*, as that formerly did in the *Roman Senate*? Would the Holy Father reject an Offer, which promis'd the Extirpation of *Heresy*, and the Establishment of the *Catholick Religion*; because it could not be made good, without the Commission of Treason? Would he send back? would he Punish? would he Discover? would he Discourage the Traitor? Nay, have we not reason to judge, from the History of this Day's Conspiracy, that tho' the Ancient *Romans* were so scrupulous as to refuse an Advantage, which could not be compass'd with Honesty; yet, according to the *Casuistical Divinity* of the *Modern Romanists*, Nothing is Dishonourable, nothing Dishonest, which may serve to promote the *Catholick Interest*? Such Practices, and such Principles shew our Adversaries to have a plentiful share of the *Wisdom of the Serpent*, but to be wholly destitute of the *Innocence of the Dove*.

Pass we on therefore, from Men of this Infamous Character; and proceed we in the

III. place, To take a View of those mighty Advantages, which result from our being at the same time both *Wise as Serpents*, and *Harmless as Doves*.

Perfect Wisdom and perfect Holiness are the Incommunicable Attributes of God Almighty: and as far as Men take care to excel in these Divine Qualities, so far do they approach towards the unattainable Perfections of the Godhead. Hence it is, that the *Wise man*, when he would give us a lofty and becoming Idea of GOD cloathes Him with the same Armour, which our Saviour hath here in the Text provided for the Good *Christian*: He shall put on Righteousness, saith he, as a Breast plate, and true Judgment instead of an Helmet. He shall take Holiness for an invincible Shield, [Wisd. xv. 18, 19.] The immaculate Purity of GOD makes him utterly detest all manner of Iniquity; the Infinity of his Wisdom places him without the Reach of any sort of Calamity. Such a degree of unfullied Holiness is too high for frail Man; He cannot attain unto it. Such a State of uninterrupted Bliss is unsuitable to the Condition of poor Mortals; they must not hope, on this side the Grave, to be possess'd of it: But as far as Human Nature can go, so far will Wisdom and Innocence carry Men. Integrity will make them strictly careful to do nothing which is Sinful; and Prudence will guard them against all Mischiefs, that are fairly avoidable.

Such is the Steadiness of their Virtue, such strong hold hath Religion.

got of their Souls and Consciences, that no Prospect of Temporal Advantage can allure them, no Appearance of Danger can deter them from their Duty : And, on the other side, such is the Soundness of their Judgment, that they will not lightly forego any Interest, which they might preserve with a good Conscience, or heedlessly run into any Danger, which they might escape without forfeiting their Integrity. Their Honesty will not suffer them to do Wrong, tho' an Opportunity should offer it self, of doing it with Secrecy and Impunity : and their Prudence will secure them from being over reach'd by the Fraud of Crafty and Treacherous Persons, *who lie in wait to deceive.* They are too Generous, to impose upon Others ; and too Cautious to be impos'd upon : Their Sincerity never allows them, upon any occasion, to fly to the sordid Arts of Lying and Dissimulation ; and their Discretion puts a Bridles into their Mouths, so as that they do not suffer those Truths to escape their Lips, which it is adviseable to Conceal.

The *Christian Religion* has taught them to *Love their Enemies, to do good to those which hate them, and to pray for those which despitefully use and persecute them* : but Prudence directs them to be aware of their Enemies ; to be upon their Guard against the malicious Designs of those, which hate them ; and to use all Honest and Lawful means of securing Themselves from despiteful Usage and Persecution. The Goodness of their Nature, and the Charitableness of their Christian Temper, will not permit them to entertain evil ^{unjust} ~~guiltless~~ Suspicions, and groundless Jealousies : They have not so bad an Opinion of Humane Nature, as to think all Persons inclin'd to do them Wrong, who are able to do it ; to look upon themselves as Unsafe, whilst it is in the Power of their Neighbours to Hurt them ; and to esteem it a Necessary part of Precaution to invade the Rights of Others, for fear that Others may invade Theirs : But, where they have been taught by long Experience, That the Power and Inclination to do mischief go hand in hand together ; where the Sense of what they have already felt from an avow'd Enemy, leaves no room for Charity to hope for a kinder Treatment ; where they find their Adversaries grasping after an Encrease of Power, with a manifest Intention of Employing it to Their Ruin, there Wisdom awakes their Vigilance, and sets them upon their guard, to do every thing which Religion allows, and Prudence prescribes, for their own Preservation.

The Integrity of such Men, will not suffer them to do any thing, which their Consciences tell them is Sinful ; and their Discretion will instruct them, how to fence their Innocent and Laudable Actions against the Danger of being mistaken by the Ignorant, or mis-represented by the malicious. A due Sense of Religion, and an awful Fear of *G O D*, is the first and Governing Principle, which influences all their Thoughts, and Words, and Actions, and makes them rigorously careful to do nothing, which may offend Him, *Who sees the Inmost Secrets of their Hearts* ; and, when they have thus taken care to approve themselves in the Sight of *G O D*, their Wisdom doth farther direct them to place their Virtues in such an
advan-

advantageous Light, as may best cover them from the Calumnies of their Adversaries; so that *their Good may not be evil spoken of.*

Wisdom, tho' not necessary in the same degree with Honesty, yet when join'd with it, is of marvellous use to give a due Lustre to Vertue, and to set it out to the best Advantage. That Good Actions may not want the utmost Beauty they are capable of, nor fail to gain the Praise and Admiration of all, who observe them, those *Christians*, who are eminently wise, as well as virtuous, do always take strict care, that their Actions be, not only as the Substance and Matter of them, agreeable, to the Laws of God; but moreover, that, as to the very Manner of their Performance, they be so done, as to appear Graceful and Amiable in the Sight of Men.

In order to this, such Good and Wise Persons are always careful to observe that Decency, which those who have best understood it, have been more able to exemplify by Special Instances, than to describe in General; which is the highest Perfection of every Art, and yet can be taught by none: which, where ever it is found, doth by a Secret irresistible Force, move our Admiration, tho' we cannot distinctly assign what it is we so readily applaud: which pleaseth the nicest Judges, and at the same times takes equally with the Unskilful; which, in a word, all Men agree to extol where ever it doth appear, but which only Persons of great Prudence, as well as unquestionable Integrity, are able to shew forth in all their Actions.

These have an accurate Discernment of what is, upon every occasion, fit and agreeable: These know exactly how to make a judicious Choice of that which is not only suitable to the Laws of Reason, as they are Men, and to the Holiness of their Profession, as they are *Christians*, but is also agreeable to their particular Conition, and to that peculiar Station, which they are to Adorn: These can adapt themselves aright to all Circumstances, and fit every thing they do to its peculiar Time and Place: These are acquainted with the Temper, Sentiments, and Interests of those, with whom they are conversant, and foreseeing what is most likely to gain their Good-esteem, can take care so to demean themselves, as may best procure it: These are carefully observ'd what it is, which usually lessen the Credit of Good Actions, and therefore are prepar'd to use alle Diligence to avoid the like occasions of Offence.

These are the Persons, who, by their excelling in Wisdom, as well as Virtue, do Honour to the Religion which they profess: These are they, who must retrieve its Reputation in a loose and profligate Age. We live amongst Men, who will not give themselves the trouble to examine the Grounds of our Holy Faith, but reject it in the Gross, and condemn it without Trial. If they can discover any the least Failing, or if they can pitch upon any Indiscret Action in those who pretend to believe the Gospel, and to act by its Rules, this they greedily lay hold of, as a just Prejudice against Religion its self: and if we appeal from the Vices and Follies of the *Christians* of our own Age, to the Exemplary Virtue and Singular Wisdom of those who first preach'd and embrac'd it, such Men, are
ready

ready to call in question the Truth of those pretended Originals, of which they can see no Copies: But if we can point out unto them Men, who prove the Sincerity of their Faith by the Holiness of their Lives, whose Actions are agreeable to their Principles, and who are as conspicuous for their Wisdom as for their Integrity; whose sober Conversation and Manners will bear the most rigorous Test, and in whom the most malicious Wit can find no Weakness and Indiscretion to expose and ridicule, then the Mouth of Profaness is presently stopt, and the Infidel is convinc'd and silenc'd; and having nothing to object to the Religious and Wise Conduct of such Men, is forc'd to confess, That *G O D is in them of a truth.*

And as it is for Persons of this Character alone, what we can hope for a Reparation to the Honour of our Holy Religion, so is it from Persons endow'd with the same Qualifications of Integrity and Wisdom, that a divided Church, and a distracted Nation must hope for the Healing of their Wounds, and Restoring of their Breaches: For, next to the Grace of *G O D*, which inspires Men with an hearty Desire of Concord, and to the Guidance of his Holy Spirit, which directs them in the pursuit of *such things as make for Peace*; no Means are more likely to put an end to our differences, and to reconcile the Minds of Fellow-Citizens, and Fellow-Christians, unhappily tearing one another to pieces, and ripping up the very Bowels of their Common Parent by their Mutual Dissentions, than the honest Endeavours and sage Counsels of such Illustrious Worthies, on whose Integrity all Men can safely rely, that they not willingly betray the Publick Interest, and on whose Prudence all Men can entirely depend that they will not, thro' Ignorance, mistake it.

From Persons thus Qualified, We may promise Our-selves the strongest Succours against the open Assaults, and secrets Attempt of the Church of *Rome*. Their Sagacity will penetrate into the most intricate Designs of *Popish* Treachery; and their Integrity will stand firm against the bold Encroachments of *Papal* Usurpation. They are too honest to be brib'd out of their Religion by the prospect of Interest, and they are too wise to be cheated out of it by the delusion of *Sophistry*. They were Persons of this Character, who, when in a late Reign, *Popery*, like an Inundation, was breaking in upon Us, bravely stood in the Gap, and resisted the Torrent: and Persons of this Character will always go on steadily and conscientiously to oppose *Popery*, tho' they should be traduc'd as favourers of it by those very Men, who, in that Day of our distress, were busy in breaking down those Fences, by which alone it was to be kept out.

The Craft of *Popish* Emissaries, void of all Honesty, may suggest; and some Well-meaning, but mistaken *Protestants*, may possibly entertain Fears of danger from the pretended *Popery* of the Church of *England*: but such Jealousies will never prevail with Persons, who are Wise as well as Honest, to do any thing for the Weakning of that Establishment, which under *God*, is our best Security against the real *Popery* of the Church of *Rome*.

The Courage of such Men will vigorously oppose our cruel Enemies,
when

when they appear in their own proper form of Ravenous and Devouring Wolves; and their Caution will desert them, when, for the deluding of unwary Souls, they put on Sheep's cloathing; Honest and Wise Men are neither to be frightened by those *Anathema's*, which our Adversaries thunder out against *Heresy* in their General Councils; nor to be caught by the crafty Williness of these Impostors, when, under a false Disguise, they rail against Forms of Prayer, against Superstitious Rites, and against *Antichrist* (as, from unquestionable Authority We know they have sometimes done) in the Separate Assemblies of deluded Sectaries. Whether these Enemies of our Constitution, would overthrow it by laying Gun-Powder under our Houses of *Parliament*, or by scattering the Seeds of Division amongst Us; We may hope, that their wicked Purposes will still be defeated by Persons always Vigilant, always Zealous for preserving our Establish'd Church and Government.

Men of Prudence cannot but be careful to prevent the Growth of that Power, which threatens Ruin to all to their Civil Interests; Men of Conscience will never fail to oppose that Religion, which is destructive of their Spiritual Welfare.

Persons of approv'd Integrity will faithfully maintain the good Laws, already made for excluding such from the Supream Government of our Church, who are by Principles engag'd to destroy it; and Persons of singular Wisdom will find out such Expedients, as may be still necessary for our farther Security.

No Humane Methods, can be lawfully us'd in order to our Preservation, will escape the Sagacity of such Men; and whilst they take care to adorn the Holiness of their Profession by the Sanctity of their Lives, whilst their Manners are Reform'd as well as their Faith, We may hope, that the Blessing of G O D will go along with their Honest Endeavours.

Great Blessing might a Nation expect, great Support might be given to our Establish'd Church, great Honour might redound to our Holy Religion, even from a few Persons, Eminent for these Qualifications; Men of warm Hearts, and cool Heads; Zealous, but with Discretion; Honest, but not Weak; Wise, but not Crafty; In short, Strict Observers of this Divine Precept of our Blessed Lord; and genuine Disciple of Him, in whom were hidden all the Treasure of Wisdom; who did no Sin, neither was Guile found in his Mouth.

To whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, Three Persons and One God be all Honour, Glory, Dominion, and Power, both Now, and for Evermore.



F I N I S: